Islands or Security? Japanese-Soviet Relations under Brezhnev and Andropov

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FOREWORD

The International Research Center for Japanese Studies is very pleased to present here the latest addition to our academic publications, the *Nichibunken Monograph Series.*

The International Research Center for Japanese Studies was established in 1987 as an Inter-University Research Institute and has played a leading role in promoting interdisciplinary and comparative investigations into Japanese culture. The insistence on the word "International" in the name of our Center refers both to the importance of our extensive academic cooperation with scholars abroad, and to the Center's emphasis on research from a global perspective.

The Center publishes two journals, *Nihon kenkyū* (in Japanese) and *Japan Review* (in English), and a monograph series *Nichibunken sōsho* for more extended investigations. Unfortunately, the works in the *Nichibunken sōsho* are all in Japanese, and thus accessible only to foreign scholars with sufficient mastery of the language.

The *Nichibunken Monograph Series* was conceived with the aim of overcoming this language barrier, and making the fruits of the research conducted here more widely available to scholars abroad. The works in this series represent monographs written specifically for the series by permanent faculty members of the Center, and have been referred and selected by the Editorial Board.

I firmly believe that this new monograph series will prove useful to the many people around the world with interests in Japanese culture, and I sincerely hope that its publication will contribute greatly to the further development of Japanese studies.

KAWAI HAYAO
Director-General
International Research Center for Japanese Studies

PREFACE

Japanese–Soviet relations is a quite neglected subject, despite its significance, which can hardly be overemphasized now and will probably increase even more in the future. Part of the reason for this academic neglect is ascribable to the difficulty of studying the subject. To begin with, those who want to specialize in this topic must be fluent in at least three languages: Russian, Japanese, and of course English, a standard academic means of communication in today's scholarly community. Furthermore, since Japanese–Soviet relations are strongly influenced by events occurring in the world in general and particularly in Asia, analysis of these bilateral relations would not be complete unless the broader framework of international relations is taken into consideration. In other words, those who want to study Japanese–Soviet relations need to be familiar with at least the quadrilateral power configurations in Northeast Asia, consisting of the U.S., the USSR, the PRC and Japan.

These and other difficulties notwithstanding, there have been several books published on Japanese–Soviet relations. These publications include: Donald C. Hellman's *Japanese Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy: The Peace Agreement with the Soviet Union* (1969); Savitri Vishwanathan's *Normalization of Soviet–Japanese Relations, 1945–1970: An Indian View* (1973); John J. Stephan's *The Kuril Islands: Russo–Japanese Frontiers in the Pacific* (1974); Young C. Kim's *Japanese–Soviet Relations: Interaction of Politics, Economics and National Security* (1974); Bhabani Sen Gupta's

Soviet–Asian Relations in the 1970s and Beyond: An Interper-ceptional Study (1976); Rodger Swearingen's *The Soviet Union and Post-War Japan: Escalating Challenge and Response* (1978); and Rajenara Kumar Jain's *The USSR and Japan: 1945–1980* (1981). These books help to fill the scholarly gap, but they are not sufficient; the focus and interest of some of these books are either limited in terms of the time period and field of relations they cover or they are superficially comprehensive.

In an attempt to make my book different from those that have been published in the past under similar titles, I have included the following salient features: 1) specific emphasis on the national security aspect rather than the "Northern Territories" issue; 2) examination of the dynamic relationships between politics, security, territory and economics; 3) discussion of determinants, capabilities, strategies, and the limits of Soviet policy toward Japan; 4) analysis of the dynamic process of action-reaction in the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union; and 5) detailed examination of Japan–Soviet relations in the late Brezhnev era and the Andropov era (1977–1983).

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I also wish to thank my colleagues at the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, who tolerated my frequent and long absences from the center and generously undertook my share of teaching, administrative and other responsibilities.

Academically, I have benefited from numerous works by Soviet, West European, American, Asian, and Japanese scholars and specialists in international affairs and Soviet politics in particular. Here, however, I must

limit myself to mentioning only those who specialize in the same subject as myself, i.e., Japanese–Soviet relations, and with whom I have had the opportunity to meet in person and discuss common interests. These people include James Morley, Donald Hellmann, Joseph M. Ha, Robert A. Scalapino, Peter A. Berton, Roger Swearingen, Paul Langer, Michael Blaker, late George Lensen, Robert Legvold, Peggy L. Falkenheim, Joachim Glaubitz, Bhabani Sen Gupta, Inoki Masamichi, the late Shimizu Hayao, Suzuki Keisuke, Ogawa Kazuo, Dmitrii V. Petrov, Igor' Latyshev, Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, Boris N. Slavinskii, Georgii Kunadze and Konstantin Sarkisov. I am particularly indebted to Young C. Kim, who encouraged me to enter this new academic field in 1977, when we first met in Washington, D.C. Special gratitude goes to John J. Stephan, who has not only been the outstanding giant in this field but has also constantly enlightened me personally through his valuable advice, comments, and observations, for which I shall never be able to reciprocate.

For the collection of research materials, I owe a great deal to the excellent services provided by the following bibliographers and librarians: Paul Horecky (Library of Congress); Patricia Polansky (University of Hawaii); Akizuki Toshiyuki and Takako, and Matsuda Jun (Hokkaidō University); Joseph D. Dwyer, Hilja Kukk and Emiko Moffitt (Hoover Institution); Wojcieck Zalewski (Stanford University); and Ōkubo Kayoko (American Center, Sapporo).

I am grateful to those personal friends of mine who kindly took the time to read, comment on, and edit parts of my manuscript: Basil Dmytryshyn, Vladimir Kusin, Paul Horecky, Roger E. Kanet, Joyce Ōkawa, Tilly C. Friedman, Dan Caldwell, Leslie Moonshine, David Holt, Carmen Wyatt, Meg Young, Tim Bartz, Laurie Freeman, and Stewart Chisholm. Without their assistance, I, a nonnative speaker of English, would not have been able to write this book. I am also thankful to those who kindly typed my manuscripts: Nana Luz, Anhe BlenmanHare, Jeannette Thomas, Marilyn Weber, Mōri Akiko, Kamiseki Atsuko, and Sueno Maki.

I cannot fail to affectionately note the cooperation of my wife, Noriko, and my two children, Michiko and Akatsuki. They patiently tolerated my devotion to a self-imposed deadline that deprived them almost completely of opportunities to enjoy the marvelous Californian weather together with their father, who ended up not even fulfilling a promise to drive them to San-Francisco.

* * *

On a fine Saturday morning in August 1983, when I was close to completing the writing of this manuscript at Stanford, I received a telephone call from my sister in Kyoto, who informed me that our mother had suffered a heart attack and was in critical condition. I was told that if I did not return to Japan immediately, I may never see my mother alive again. I drove immediately to San Francisco Airport and flew to Kyoto, leaving my work unfinished. Fortunately, my mother was able to continue living for several more years. However, in the meantime I entirely lost the momentum for finishing my book. I finally resumed work on this book after returning to the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaidō University, Sapporo, while commuting regularly from Sapporo to Kyoto in order to take care of my mother.

To make things worse, during this difficult period of trying to work on my book and take care of my bedridden mother, radical changes were taking place in the Soviet Union. Andropov died and Chernenko came to power. Shortly after, Chernenko died and Gorbachev assumed the leadership. I expected that Gorbachev would make drastic policy changes toward Japan—changes which, I thought, would force me to radically revise my manuscript. However, the innovations in policy toward Japan made by Gorbachev proved to be far less than he had been expected to make. Naturally, such a development of events greatly disappointed me and others who were hoping to see a great diplomatic breakthrough occurring in Japan–Soviet relations. However, there is nothing bad in entirety. Ironically,

precisely because a dramatic breakthrough did not occur in the bilateral relations between Japan and the Soviet Union, my manuscript, which I had almost completed at Stanford, had not entirely lost its value. Only minor amendments were needed for publication.

June 19, 1997

KIMURA HIROSHI

INTRODUCTION

Relations between Japan and the Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation, have remained cool throughout most of the postwar period and were particularly unstable and strained in the period covered in this book; i.e., the late Brezhnev era and the Andropov era (1976–1983). What is the nature of these unstable and strained relations?

To begin with, politico-diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Japan have lacked a stable legal basis. Although diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Japan were normalized in 1956, a peace treaty has yet to be concluded. Without a peace treaty, some schools of thought on international law[1] maintain that these two countries have not put a complete end to the state of war. For example, the late Professor L. Oppenheim of Cambridge University states in one of the most authoritative standard textbooks on international law: "The most frequent end of war is a treaty of peace. Many writers correctly call a treaty of peace the normal mode of terminating war."[2] A Soviet textbook, *International Law,* edited by the Institute of Law of the USSR Academy of Sciences, states the same view: "a peace treaty legally ends a state of war between the signatory states, thereby establishing political and other relations between them."[3]

One way to illustrate the abnormal degree to which Japanese–Soviet relations became stalemated is to compare them with the bilateral relations between Japan and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Japan and China normalized relations in 1972 and concluded a peace treaty only six years later, in 1978. In contrast, Japan and the Soviet Union,

despite their earlier normalization of relations in 1956, have still not concluded a peace treaty.

The poor record of exchange visits by top political leaders also demonstrates that diplomatic relations between Japan and the Soviet Union have been neither warm nor smooth. The underlying assumption here is that communication and contacts between top political leaders are indicative of the state of relations between countries. In the 27-year period from the normalization of relations between Moscow and Tokyo (1956) to the end of the period covered in this book (1983), only one Japanese Premier (Tanaka Kakuei) visited the Soviet Union (in 1973), while the highest Soviet political leader ever to visit Japan was USSR Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan (in 1961 and 1964). During the same period of time, six Japanese foreign ministers visited Moscow, while the Soviet counterpart, Andrei A. Gromyko, came to Tokyo only three times (in 1966, 1972 and 1976). Compared with the diplomatic intercourse between the USSR and other Western capitalist countries (such as the Federal Republic of Germany, France, and the United States), visited by both Nikita S. Khrushchev and Leonid I. Brezhnev, the number of exchange visits between the Soviet Union and Japan was extremely small. Of particularly significance is the fact that both Soviet and Japanese foreign ministers refused to visit one another's capitals; instead they held brief meetings in New York while attending the United Nations General Assembly. This is a clear indication of an abnormal state of Japanese–Soviet bilateral relations.

Japanese–Soviet relations have also been unstable and strained in terms of security. Publicly, Tokyo has been advocating the so-called "omnidimentional or all-directional foreign policy"—diplomacy aimed at developing friendly relations with all countries in the world. It is an open secret, however, that, in practice, Tokyo regards the USSR as almost the sole "potential threat"[4] to the security of Japan, particularly since the conclusion in 1978 of the Sino–Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty, by which the PRC ceased being a potential Japanese enemy. In his much-disputed remarks made during his January 1983 trip to Washington, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro made no secret of the country that demanded increased Japanese security efforts. The outspoken prime minister declared that "the

whole Japanese archipelago should be like an unsinkable aircraft carrier against infiltration of the [*Soviet*] *Backfire* bomber." (emphasis added by Kimura Hiroshi).[5] He also stated that "Japan should have complete control of the four straits that go through the Japanese islands so that there should be no passage of *Soviet* submarines nor other naval activities." (emphasis added by H.K.)[6]

Although Moscow does not similarly regard Japan as a threat to national security, concern has arisen over Japan's increasingly independent diplomatic and defense postures. The Soviets began to worry about Tokyo's possible participation in such anti-Soviet security alliances as a "Washington –Tokyo–Seoul" or "Washington–Tokyo–Beijing" axis, or JANZUS (Japan–Australia–New Zealand–United States) alliance. Moscow showed particular concern over the expanding U.S.–Japan military cooperation. In an attempt to check Tokyo's decision to accept U.S. F-16's at the Misawa airbase in northern Japan and to counter Nakasone's remarks cited above, Soviet leader Iurii V. Andropov threatened the Japanese with nuclear retaliation. Such escalation of action and reaction on security matters further strained relations between these two neighboring countries.

Japanese–Soviet relations have also been strained in nonpolitical and nonmilitary areas such as economic, scientific, cultural and sports. It may be true that exchanges between countries with different political and economic systems are not as frequent as those between countries with the same or similar systems, and it may also be true that such exchanges inherently have serious limitations. It is undeniable, however, that by the nature of today's increasing tendency toward interdependence, we have been overcoming the ideological barriers and systemic disparities, especially in the fields of trade and other economic, cultural and athletic activities. Trade relations between West Germany, France and the Soviet Union and those between Japan and the PRC provide good illustrations of this. Yet, even in nonpolitical and nonmilitary fields, Japan and the Soviet Union have been unsuccessful in developing a good, stable relationship. Unlike West Germany, France, Italy, Finland and other West European countries, Japan failed to conclude a long-term intergovernmental agreement on economic cooperation with

the USSR;[7] Japan's trade with the Soviet Union in the period covered in this book constituted less than two percent of Japan's entire foreign trade. Nor has a long-term fishing agreement been signed yet between Japan and the Soviet Union. Personnel exchanges of high government officials and government-sponsored cultural and athletic delegations between Japan and the Soviet Union have been irregular at best, and at times even frozen.